

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A remote control, comprising:

 a button having an associated means for indicating that the button may be operated to interact with interactive program content;
 a receiving circuit for accepting a transmission received from a source external to the remote control;

 a controlling circuit linked to the receiving circuit and the means for indicating where the controlling circuit functions to activate the means for indicating in response to receipt of the transmission by the receiving circuit; and

 a transmission circuit for transmitting a signal to a target external to the remote control in response to activation of the button wherein the controlling circuit allows transmission of the signal to the target external to the remote control in response to activation of the button only when the means for indicating is activated.

2. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, wherein the button is a hard button.

3. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, wherein the button is a soft button.

4. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, wherein the means for indicating comprises a visual means.

5. (Original) The remote control as in claim 4, wherein the visual means comprises a means for selectively modifying the appearance of the button.
6. (Original) The remote control as in claim 5, wherein selectively modifying the appearance of the button comprises animating the button, illuminating the button, or changing the color of the button.
7. (Original) The remote control as in claim 6, wherein selectively modifying the appearance of the button is performed intermittently.
8. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, further comprising a label associated with the button indicating the nature of the functionality provided by the button.
9. (Original) The remote control as in claim 8, wherein the label resides on the button.
10. (Original) The remote control as in claim 8, wherein the label resides adjacent the button.
11. (Original) The remote control as in claim 8, wherein the label comprises alphanumeric characters.
12. (Original) The remote control as in claim 8, wherein the label comprises a graphical

symbol.

13. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, wherein the receiving circuit comprises an IR receiver.

14. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, wherein the receiving circuit comprises an RF receiver.

15. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, wherein the transmitting circuit comprises an IR transmitter.

16. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, wherein the transmitting circuit comprises an RF transmitter.

17. (Original) The remote control as in claim 1, wherein the signal comprises data for use in making a purchase, answering a question, or initiating a multimedia program.

18. (Previously Presented) A method for controlling operation of a remote control having a button and an associated means for indicating that the button may be operated to interact with interactive program content, comprising:

activating the means for indicating in response to a transmission received by the remote control from a source external to the remote control; and

allowing the remote control to transmit a signal in response to activation of the button only when the means for indicating is activated.

19. (Original) The method as in claim 18, wherein the button is a hard button.

20. (Original) The method as in claim 18, wherein the button is a soft button.

21. (Original) The method as in claim 18, wherein the means for indicating comprises a visual means.

22. (Original) The method as in claim 21, further comprising selectively activating the visual means to modifying the appearance of the button.

23. (Original) The method as in claim 22, wherein selectively activating the visual means to modifying the appearance of the button comprises animating the button, illuminating the button, or changing the color of the button.

24. (Original) The method as in claim 22, wherein selectively activating the visual means is performed intermittently.

25-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) A system for facilitating and encouraging user interaction with program content, the system comprising;

an entertainment system for providing and displaying the program content, including a prompt which requests a response from the user, and for transmitting at least one instruction to the remote control; and

a remote control having at least one button, the remote control being responsive to the instruction for modifying the appearance of the at least one button in accordance with the instruction from a first displayed state to a second displayed state to indicate to the user that a response may be made to the prompt via operation of the at least one button while the appearance of the at least one button is in the second displayed state;

wherein the instruction comprises a data signal including at least a control command identifier for indicating that the instruction is a button based command;
wherein the control command identifier further includes a command for restricting operation of the remote control such that only the at least one button indicated by the instruction may be operated; and wherein the command for restricting operation is activated for a preset time period.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) The system as in claim 29, wherein the remote control has programming for selectively modifying the appearance of the at least one button by animating the button, illuminating the button, or changing the color of the button.

32-40. (Canceled)